

Listing of Claims:

This listing of claims reflects all claim amendments and replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

In brief, claims 36–49 have been canceled, without prejudice; claims 5, 11, 13, 22, and 28–35 have been amended; and new claims 50 and 51 have been added.

1. (Original) A method of bone fixation, comprising:

placing respective first and second fasteners through an opening and a slot of a bone plate and into a first portion of a bone having a discontinuity flanked by the first portion and a second portion of the bone, so that the first and second fasteners cooperate with the opening and the slot to define a permitted range of motion for the bone plate;

securing the bone plate to the second portion of the bone;

adjusting an angular disposition of the bone plate relative to the first portion of the bone after the steps of placing and securing, thereby adjusting a relative disposition of the first and second portions of the bone; and

fixing the angular disposition of the bone plate relative to the first portion of the bone.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of placing includes placing the first and second fasteners into a distal portion of a radius bone.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of placing includes placing the first fastener in an opening that is not elongate so that translational movement of the bone plate relative to the first portion is restricted.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of placing includes (1) a step of placing the first fastener in an opening that is a slot, (2) a step of moving the bone plate translationally relative to the first portion of the bone, and (3) a step of placing the second fastener in a slot after the step of moving.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of placing includes a step of placing first and second fasteners into a bone having first and second portions defined by ~~one of cutting~~ or ~~[[and]]~~ breaking the bone.

6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of securing includes a step of placing one or more additional fasteners through the bone plate and into the second portion of the bone.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of adjusting includes a step of pivoting the bone plate about a pivot axis defined by the first fastener.

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of adjusting includes a step of manipulating a handle connected to the bone plate to facilitate movement of the bone plate.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of fixing includes a step of tightening the first and second fasteners until they are in pressing contact with the bone plate.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of fixing includes a step of placing one or more additional fasteners through the bone plate and into the first portion of the bone.

11. (Currently Amended) A method of bone fixation, comprising:

placing a first fastener through a first slot of a bone plate and into a first portion of a bone having a discontinuity flanked by the first portion and a second portion of the bone;

moving the bone plate along a path defined cooperatively by the first fastener and ~~parallel to~~ the first slot to adjust a translational disposition of the bone plate relative to the first portion;

introducing a second fastener through a second slot of the bone plate and into the first portion of the bone;

adjusting an angular disposition of the bone plate relative to the first portion of the bone after the steps of placing, moving, and introducing, by movement of the bone plate within a permitted range of motion defined cooperatively by the ~~corresponding pairs of~~ fasteners and the slots;

securing the bone plate to the second portion of the bone; and

fixing the angular disposition of the bone plate relative to the first portion of the bone.

12. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of placing including a step of placing a first fastener into a distal portion of a radius bone.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of placing includes a step of placing a first fastener into a bone having first and second portions defined by ~~one of~~ cutting or ~~[[and]]~~ breaking the bone.

14. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of securing is performed before the step of adjusting.

15. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of fixing includes a step of placing one or more additional fasteners through the bone plate and into the first portion of the bone after the step of adjusting.

16. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein at least one of the steps of moving and adjusting includes a step of manipulating a handle connected to the bone plate to facilitate movement of the bone plate.

17. (Original) A method of bone fixation, comprising:
selecting a bone plate defining an opening and a guide slot;
connecting the bone plate to a bone by placing respective first and second fasteners through the opening and the guide slot and into the bone so that the bone plate has an angular disposition relative to the bone;
adjusting the angular disposition by moving the bone plate along a path permitted by relative travel of the second fastener along the guide slot; and
restricting additional movement of the bone plate relative to the bone to fix the angular disposition.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the step of adjusting includes a step of pivoting the bone plate about an axis defined by the first fastener.

19. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the step of adjusting includes a step of manipulating a handle connected to the bone plate to facilitate movement of the bone plate.

20. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate having an axial portion and a transverse portion extending transversely of the axial portion.

21. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the step of connecting includes a step of connecting the bone plate to a distal portion of a radius bone.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 17, wherein the step of connecting includes a step of advancing the first and second fasteners such that the fasteners are not fully tightened ~~into an incompletely advanced position~~, and wherein the step of adjusting is performed with the first and second fasteners not fully tightened ~~in the incompletely advanced position~~.

23. (Original) The method of claim 17, the opening being elongate, wherein the step of adjusting moves the opening translationally relative to the first fastener.

24. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the step of connecting includes a step of connecting the bone plate to a first portion of the bone, the method further comprising a step of securing the bone plate to a second portion of the bone so that the step of adjusting creates an adjusted alignment of the first and second portions and the step of restricting fixes the adjusted alignment.

25. (Original) The method of claim 24, wherein the step of securing is performed after the step of connecting.

26. (Original) The method of claim 17, wherein the step of selecting includes a step of selecting a bone plate defining one or more additional openings, and wherein the step of restricting includes a step of placing at least one fastener through the one or more additional openings and into the bone.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein the step of placing places the at least one fastener generally between the opening and the guide slot.

28. (Currently Amended) A method of bone fixation, comprising:

selecting a bone plate system including ~~, comprising:~~ (a) a bone plate ~~body portion~~ adapted to be secured to a bone, the bone plate ~~body portion~~ defining at least one opening for receiving a fastener, ~~[[;]]~~ and (b) a handle portion ~~adapted to mount to the body portion to facilitate movement of the body portion relative to the bone while the bone plate is being positioned on a bone;~~

~~joining~~ attaching the handle portion to the bone plate ~~body portion~~;

connecting the bone plate to a bone by placing at least one fastener through one or more of the at least one opening in the bone plate ~~body portion~~;

adjusting the disposition of the bone plate relative to the bone, or a portion thereof, via manipulation of ~~using~~ the handle portion; and

restricting additional movement of the bone plate relative to the bone to fix the disposition.

29. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein the step of selecting a bone plate system includes a step of choosing a bone plate ~~body portion~~ in which the at least one opening includes an opening and a guide slot.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29, wherein the step of connecting includes a step of placing respective first and second fasteners through the opening and the guide slot and into the bone so that the bone plate ~~body portion~~ has an angular disposition relative to the bone, and wherein the step of adjusting includes a step of modifying the angular disposition by moving the bone plate ~~body portion~~ along a path permitted by relative travel of the second fastener along the guide slot.

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29, wherein the guide slot forms ~~forming~~ an arcuate path corresponding to a portion of a circle, wherein the circle is centered approximately at ~~about~~ the opening, and wherein the step of adjusting includes a step of pivoting ~~rotating~~ the bone plate about the opening.

32. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein the step of selecting a bone plate system includes choosing a bone plate ~~body portion~~ in which the at least one opening includes first and second slots.

33. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 32, the bone having first and second portions flanked by a discontinuity, wherein the steps of connecting and adjusting include steps of:

placing a first fastener through the first slot and into the first portion of the bone;

moving the bone plate ~~body portion~~ along a path defined cooperatively by the first fastener and ~~parallel to~~ the first slot to adjust a translational disposition of the bone plate ~~body portion~~ relative to the first portion;

introducing a second fastener through the second slot and into the first portion of the bone;

adjusting an angular disposition of the bone plate ~~body portion~~ relative to the first portion of the bone after the steps of placing, moving, and introducing, by movement of the bone plate ~~body portion~~ within a permitted range of motion defined cooperatively by ~~corresponding pairs of~~ the fasteners and the slots; and

securing the bone plate to the second portion of the bone.

34. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein the step of attaching ~~joining~~ includes a step of disposing ~~threading~~ the handle portion in threaded engagement with ~~[[into]]~~ the bone plate ~~body portion~~.

35. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, further comprising a step of disconnecting ~~unjoining~~ the handle portion from the bone plate ~~body portion~~, after the step of adjusting.

36.–49. (Canceled)

50. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of placing includes a step of placing the second fastener through the slot before the first fastener is placed through the opening.

51. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the first portion is a major portion of the bone, wherein the second portion is a minor portion of the bone, and wherein the step of placing includes a step of placing respective first and second fasteners into the major portion of the bone.